Resources for Finding and Using Evidence Reviews and Evaluations

IPA assembled this list of resources for use in designing a program and developing a theory of change.

The following resources can be useful throughout the design phase of your program—showing you how others have defined similar problems and in what contexts, which interventions others have tried, and how large the effects of these programs have been found to be. This will be useful in designing the program.

These resources can also be useful for thinking ahead to a future evaluation. Many of them describe: the research methods, such as the evaluation type, sample size and sampling strategy; the research questions; the timing of the evaluation; and the outcomes measured. There is no one-size-fits-all evaluation plan, but reviewing what others have done and how they have overcome specific challenges can help you think through options for your own

evaluation strategy.

Though far from exhaustive, the resources here are a good place to start when designing your program or theory of change. Taken together, they can:

- provide a broad view of the landscape in a particular sector or region
- show what has been proven to work
- demonstrate what effect sizes have been seen in different programs in different places
- provide guidance while you are developing a clear problem statement, conducting a literature review, and refining the problem and contexts
- highlight research designs that have been implemented in a range of contexts
- identify potential data sources
- demonstrate what survey questions have been used in various impact evaluations

We provide three sets of resources: 1) where to look for high-quality impact evaluations, 2) where to look for systematic reviews of a range of topics, and 3) how to conduct a literature or evidence review. While we included only those resources we feel are generally good sources of credible studies—those that define a credible counterfactual and establish causality—we cannot vouch for the quality of each study. We encourage you to apply what you've learned about evaluation, particularly on credibility and transportability, when assessing the quality and applicability of each study contained within these resources.

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